

# National Catholic Theater Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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INTERESTED IN "ST. MARK?"

Just about a year ago your chairman wrote for this news letter a statement which said:

We all have our special jobs to do in the world emergency which now confronts us. But the hardest job of all is to keep on doing the everyday job a little bit better than we have ever done it before ... to preserve, in fact, the very fabric of civic and spiritual life for which we are fighting.

This is doubly true a year later. Every college and every community theatre is truly a theatre of the home front. Ours is the special responsibility to keep alive in visual form the spiritual and the civic ideals for which we are fighting.

QUESTION: how many of us this Christmas are redeeming the community aspects of this great feast in terms of good theatre? Are we doing the miracle and morality plays on the steps of our churches and our cathedrals as they were done in days of old? (Or in days not so long ago by Federal theatre?) Or are we letting mass merchandising visualize the Christmas season in a purely material way?

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QUESTION: are we doing the plays which reveal the American way of life at its best? Or are we going through tired motions, doing any plays which seem to fill the schedule needs and not worrying too much about their illumination of our immediate past, present and future?

If it seems difficult to do plays, with fewer men and fewer of all basic ingredients, remember it isn't so easy for the Russians to present plays in the front lines either. But they are presenting the plays. They are living a full life while they are struggling to preserve that life. Can we do less?

Theatre in war time, particularly our community type of theatre is not a luxury. It is a very real necessity, as the experience of many groups in England clearly reveals. Let us inventory our respective community needs - and our respectively community assets - and let us bring to the secondary schools, the defense areas, the factory centers, the widest variety of good theatre it is in our power to assemble. Above all, let us judge our contributions by our potential strength and not by our current limitations. Only then can we rise above the limitations. And rise we must.

(signed) Emmet Lavery  
Chairman N.C.T.C.

#### SIX TURNED THIRTEEN

Count them --- eleven, twelve, thirteen! And we thought we'd get away with six!

And so the New York Blackfriars Guild took stock and discovered their scheduled six performances of "Inside Story" wouldn't be enough to meet ticket demands. It was a boost in the sale of group blocs that boosted sales. Numerous school, parish and business organizations reaped the benefit of cut-rates for quantity ticket purchases.

"Inside Story", which was written by defense worker Peter Sheehan, is "strictly escapist."

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What are you doing this season?

"A smooth performance!" That's how a local paper sized up the opening night of the Springfield Junior College presentation of "Skylark". You know the story ---- Gertrude Lawrence did it on Broadway and both the movies and radio used it this year.

It was more to the credit then of the student production staff that they successfully handled a drama that "gave no opportunity for camouflaging of roles or faux pas."

This was the first play offered by the College Little Theatre under a new plan of a campus community theatre. Prominent local actors of Springfield will take stellar roles in scheduled plays. The group now is made up of ninety college men and women of the city.

#### HAIL TO THE GIRLS!

(The following is reprinted from "Friar-Crackers" --- bulletin of the Dayton Chapter of the Blackfriars Guild.)

Hooray for the Girls-  
They've done it again;  
Presented a play,  
Without any men.

Every one was anxious  
To see how it would be  
To put on a play,  
Without a single "he."

Well, "Brief Music" is over  
It was a success, 'and how.'  
The costumes were terrific  
The setting was a Wow!

So take a bow Sir Weaver  
The war can't keep us down,  
Even tho' the men are gone,  
The girls still go to town.

Our season opened with a bang,  
The girls have shown the way,  
For all of us to carry on  
Till our boys come home some day.

Let's all pull together  
It takes a heap of work, tis true,  
But it will make a better Club  
For you and you and YOU!

Fordham University's Mimes and Mummerd put the school's triple stage to work on November 20, 21 and 22 with an original play by Lieut. John T. Dugan. Lieut Dugan wrote "Martyr Without Tears" in 1941 when he was a senior student without idea of the Army or duty overseas.

The story --- presented eleven scenes with but one intermission --- concerns a Jesuit priest in a little tryannized republic. Forbidden to wear any religious garb, threatened with the firing squad, but keen in his determination to beat intolerance and religious oppression, he fights with the intensest self-sacrifice. As it may well seem, the story is based on fact but the characters and locale have been fictionalized.

Lieut. Dugan played Lucifer last year in Fordham's Modern Morality plays.

#### CONFERENCE ROUND-UP

LORAS COLLEGE has scheduled lectures by Alfred Noyes and Margaret Webster.

CONGRATULATIONS Francis E. Myers. Mr. Myers has been elected president of the Troy, New York, Chapter of the Blackfriars Guild.

CHAIRMAN LAVERY'S "M in N" goes into N.Y. rehearsals in early December.

LETTERS TO LUCERNE, Samuel French, is now available to Conference members. The rate --- instead of \$35 and \$25 --- is \$25 for the first and \$20 for each succeeding performance. We particularly urge you, however, to follow the procedure outlined on page 4 to avail yourself of the special Conference royalty rate. We suggest this play to girls' schools.

MUNDELEIN COLLEGE, Speech Department, is presenting a fantasy, "Once in a Palace." Costumes and settings will be stylized.

DAYTON BLACKFRIARS presented "Brief Music" on October 25 and 27. And after it was over the audience was invited to "come in and get acquainted." The Guild's combination workroom and clubroom was opened to visitors.

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Brooks Atkinson in The New York Times of November 15 said it was guessed that eight or ten thousand people poured into or around St. Patrick's Cathedral to attend the funeral of George M. Cohan.

Most of them came, he added, "out of sorrow and affection" to mourn the loss of a superb technician who was more than that. "George M." liked people, believed in them, treated them honorable and with a sense of responsibility. He was high-minded about the theatre and stood for decency on the stage.

Cohan loved the theatre ---- so much that the bawdy, blasphemous trends of the last twenty years made him unhappy. It was a far cry from 1914 when his own "Seven Keys to Baldpate" was described as "about the best and cleanest joke ever played in the American theatre."

His style and spirit were born to the theatre. He had a matchless instinct for it. Never a great playwright or actor, he could nevertheless, write for it in prose, verse, or music; he could dance for it with hat and stick and act in it with a kind of jauntiness and improvisation.

Cohan was as American as his birthday --- July 4. He was Yankee Doodle Dandy one hundred per cent and through his music and spirit he gave something priceless to his country.

#### INTRODUCING SPALDING

Spalding Institute, Peoria, Illinois, has bowed into the Conference with an established activities line-up worthy of a veteran. "What a Life" and "The Cradle Song" are to be first and second productions this season.

More than that they have promoted parish units in the drama. The purpose, of course, writes Rev. Gregory Wiesner, OSB, is to stimulate talent and develop interest. And so far, he reports, most of the pastors have been genuinely cooperative and they are looking forward to an expansive program in coming years.

Such initiative deserves applause and we're applauding! especially since an inter-parish tournament of parochial one act plays is already under consideration for this year.



## THIS IS THE WAY

Yes, this is the way we save publishers bookkeeping headaches and guarantee ourselves smooth running, lower priced opening nights. Both the Samuel French Company and Dramatists Play Service have suggested that the following steps be followed by Conference members who wish to take advantage of royalty reductions which are offered to us on certain plays.

1. Be certified by the N.C.T.C. at least one month in advance of production. To do this write to this office telling us the play you wish to use and the date of performance.
2. Pay the reduced royalty fee to the publisher five days (or more) in advance of production. If you wait any longer than five days, the maximum fee will be payable.

## INTERESTED IN "ST. MARK?"

Emphatically so the Catholic Theatre of Detroit would reply. They billed the new Maxwell Anderson play for November, but before their curtain went up their business manager Paul Lilly came to New York to see how Broadway did it.

Also on Mr. Lilly's list of things to do in Manhattan were (1) buy costumes for the Detroit production and (2) see the Blackfriar show, "Inside Story."

Perhaps you too would be interested in doing "The Eve of St. Mark." It has been judged by numberless critics as first rate theatre and special arrangements have been made for producing it.

The National Theatre Conference has released application forms which must be filled out and returned before permission will be given for production. Additional information can be obtained from Dr. Lee Norvelle, Chairman New Play Project of the NTC, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

## NOVEMBER-DECEMBER PRODUCTION NOTES

Springfield Junior College	Skylark	Nov. 13-14
Catholic Theatre of Detroit	The Eve of St. Mark	Nov. 26-27-28
Mundelein College, Chicago	Once in a Palace	Nov. 22
Fordham University, N. Y.	Martyr Without Tears	Nov. 20-21-22
Troy, N.Y., Blackfriars	Song Out of Sorrow	
Catholic Theatre Guild, Louisville, Kentucky	Heaven Can Wait	
Mundelein College, Chicago	York Nativity Play	Dec. 13
Catholic University	Once in a Life Time	Dec. 13

## SILVER JUBILEE

No, thanks, we're not having any, said Manhattan's Theatre Guild this month as it turned down the thought of a silver jubilee celebration. We're much too busy, founder Lawrence Langer, explained, and besides, this isn't the year for celebrations. With that the Guild went into its twenty-fifth season with Philip Barry's "Without Love," and "Mr. Sycamore" --- a fantasy of a tired postman who turned into a tree.

But a magazine critic tartly said "neither production would have rated a bid to the exciting birthday parties of the Guild's youth." A thumbnail sketch of the Guild's career bridges World War I and World War II and highlights Katherine Cornell, experimental theatre, and Eugene O'Neill. It hobbled the depression and the threat offered the stage by talking pictures.

To the Guild's credit is the partnership of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontaine; the introduction of Rodgers and Hart, and the notable objective of producing plays "not ordinarily produced by the commercial managers." And by that the Guild founding fathers meant any theme having social or experimental significance. Profits from successful plays were plowed back into the experimental types and now twenty-five years after with audiences from coast to coast the Guild goes on experimenting.

